

President Clinton. And the answer to that is, this agreement—I mean, I can see that even as an outsider—this agreement sets up a framework to embody in a thousand ways the principle of consent. If he doesn't like some detail, then the people will be perfectly free to modify it in the future within the framework of the agreement. So why take the risk that this moment won't present itself again for another generation, when anything that he believes is wrong with it, if he thinks he can persuade a majority he's right, can be modified by the people themselves in the future?

Mr. Frost. Thank you, both, very much, indeed. Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. President, thank you so much.

President Clinton. Thank you, David.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:37 p.m. in the Weston Park estate for later broadcast on "Breakfast With Frost" on BBC1 television. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; President Soeharto of Indonesia; and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan. Prime Minister Blair referred to the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Mr. Frost referred to Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble and Member of Parliament Willie Ross; and Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral of India. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom by John King of the Cable News Network in Weston-under-Lizard

May 16, 1998

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Mr. King. Let me start by thanking both of you for sharing some time on what is obviously a very busy day. We're in the closing days of the campaign for the peace initiative in Northern Ireland, and suddenly there seems to be apprehension, a lot of opposition. You see some slippage in the public opinion polls, the critics saying that you see these people, terrorists, criminals, at rallies being hailed as heroes.

Each of you, if you could share your thoughts on what you think of the tone of the campaign, and do you share that apprehension? And how do you counter the message of those who say, vote no?

Prime Minister Blair. I think before we get a vote as important as this, there is bound to be a lot of apprehension, consideration by people, and it's right that they treat this seriously, because it affects their future. And one of the fascinating things is there has been very little debate in this referendum campaign about the institutional structure, the Northern Ireland Assembly, the relationship with the Republic of Ireland, because the thing has wrecked every attempt to have a peace agreement in Northern Ireland for the past 50, 60 years. Instead, people are worried, as you say, about things like prisoners.

But as I say to people, when you look at the facts, these guys who were out on the platform the other day under day-release schemes, they were done years ago. The vast majority of prisoners will be out within a few years anyway. And in the end, people have got to look at the package as a whole and say, "What is the best for the future: to have stability and prosperity and the chance to bring up your children with some prospect of staying in Northern Ireland and doing well, or to slip back into the ways that Northern Ireland knew for decade upon decade of division and bitterness and hatred?"

President Clinton. I think some of the reservation has come from people who wonder: Well, is there some sort of trick here; can somebody have it both ways; can they be part of the political life of the country; and can they sort of condone violence? And I can tell you, at least from America's point of view, the answer to that is no. Anybody who resorts to violence will have no friends in the United States. I don't care what side they're on or what their heritage is or what their previous ties are.

And I think I can speak for the overwhelming majority of Irish-Americans in both the Catholic and Protestant communities, that all we have

ever wanted was a just peace. This peace embodies the principle of consent. It gives the Irish people of both traditions the right to chart their future in Northern Ireland and to make of it what they will. I think, if it is embraced, you'll see a big increase in involvement of Irish-Americans and other Americans eager to invest in Northern Ireland, eager to lift prosperity and to show people the benefits of peace.

And so I very much hope that they will take that leap of faith and ask themselves a simple question: What is the downside risk of going forward? It is so much lower than the downside risk of blowing this opportunity.

Mr. King. You, at one point, considered visiting at the end of this trip, going to Northern Ireland, to the Republic of Ireland, decided not, perhaps that it would be viewed as meddling. Now in the last 24 to 48 hours, you've decided to speak out again forcefully, publicly. Why did you feel that necessary? And in your view, what role can you play in that process?

And sir, what role do you think the people of Ireland will consider as they listen to the American President?

President Clinton. Well, I decided to speak out because I think that the people of Northern Ireland know that I care a lot about the peace process, that the United States has been involved in it, that we've tried to not only—I think it's important to point out not only has Mr. Adams, the Sinn Féin leader, been to the United States a lot, but I have spent far more time with Mr. Trimble and other leaders, Unionist leaders, than any American President ever has.

I've tried to listen to both sides, to learn, to just encourage them to make their own peace and chart their own future. And so I think it's appropriate for me to speak out. I just was afraid if I went there—I can remember when people from outside used to come to my home State and try to influence elections. It never worked, because in the end voters instinctively know they have to live with the consequences of their decision. So that's different.

But if a journalist like you asks me a question about what I think the arguments are, I think that it's important for me to answer. And I hope that people on all sides of the issue will listen to what I have to say, because at least I have some experience here; I know something about this. I know something about what happened in Bosnia; I know something about what

happened in the Middle East; I know something about people who are divided and the difference in peace and war, or peace and sort of purgatory with violence. And peace has unfailingly been better, in the toughest of circumstances.

Mr. King. As to people who actually get a vote listen to him, your friend, why should they listen to him?

Prime Minister Blair. I think people do listen because people know the President is sincere, deeply committed, and actually knowledgeable about what has happened in Northern Ireland. And I can say, right from the time I became Prime Minister, but actually before that when the President visited Northern Ireland in 1995 I think it was, that his visit made a huge impact. People felt that he was someone that understood. Perhaps more than any other American President, people really feel that President Clinton both understands, knows, and people, they can also feel his willing them to do well. And I think people certainly will listen to that very much.

Mr. King. As you look forward to this vote, take us back if you will. You have described this process as agonizingly difficult. In the last few hours, you had a series of transatlantic conversations yourselves. Mr. President, you were on the phone with Mr. Adams I believe twice, Mr. Trimble at least once, John Hume. Can you take us inside those conversations, pacing, raising your voice? You had people on each side that, "Nevermind, I can't do this. I'm going to back out." How did you keep it together, and how did you interrelate personally as you went through this process?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, I don't think it was so much a question of raising our voice or—obviously, these are conversations that you have with people at a particularly difficult moment, and you don't go right back over them the whole time. But I think in many ways what I found was tremendously useful in respect to the President's intervention was that people did and do respect his views on it, because, obviously in part, he's the President of the United States, but actually it's more to do with him personally, having shown commitment all the way through, having listened to all sides in the conflict, and therefore having some standing because of this own personal commitment, some credibility, if you like, to say to people, "Look, the eyes of the world are upon us. Let's see if we can go for this thing and make it happen."

Mr. King. And as Thursday night turned to Good Friday, at any point did you think: This isn't going to happen; it's going to collapse?

Prime Minister Blair. I'm afraid I thought that pretty regularly, at about hourly intervals. But in the end—I mean, what always comes back home to me is we're 2 years off the year 2000; there is so much happening in the world, so many changes that I've seen in the last 10 or 15 years of my lifetime. I can't believe 2 years off the millennium that a place like Northern Ireland, which has got this extraordinary potential, where the people are tremendous people, as you know if you've been there, I cannot believe we can't find a way to live with each other 2 years off the new millennium with all the changes in the world, with all the possibilities there are. So even though a lot of the time I was sitting there thinking, "Can we really make this happen," I have a sort of inner optimism about it.

Mr. King. And what was your message in those phone calls? You were probably half asleep as you started some of them.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I just—when I talked to Prime Minister Blair or Prime Minister Ahern or George Mitchell, I was mostly listening. But when I talked to the parties, what I heard from them actually was very like what you're hearing from the general public now. It was sort of the darkness before the dawn. It was like, "Okay, we made this deal, and oh, there's a few things down the road that we'd like to improve," but what they really needed was not me to talk about the specifics; what they really needed was for me to remind them of the big picture, that it was time to join hands and jump off the diving board together and get in the pool and swim to shore.

And I say that not in a disrespectful way but in a respectful way. It's very hard, once you've been estranged from people for a long time, to overcome your fears and distrust. And as I have said repeatedly, I'll never forget Prime Minister Rabin telling me before Israel signed the agreement with the PLO, that everybody was reluctant to do it, but you don't make peace with your friends. You have to make peace with those and then make them your friends, because of the estrangement of the past. That's what I want people to think about.

If every voter in Northern Ireland says, "What are we going to look like in 2000, and what's it going to look like in 2010," Britain here—

Mr. Blair is the President of the EU in this cycle. Britain leading the united Europe; Ireland a part of the united Europe with one of the best reforming economies, the Republic of Ireland; Northern Ireland, where Britain and Ireland join in some sort of fashion no matter what decision they make.

Now, they're going to be at the vortex of something very, very big, if they can just liberate themselves it could change the past. They don't have to give up their traditions; they can value them. They've agreed to the principle of consent. They have set up a mechanism by which they can chart their own future. What remains is really just to take the leap of faith and realize that the risk of going forward is infinitesimal, tiny, compared to the risk of letting this opportunity slip away.

Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia

Mr. King. We're short on time, so if I could ask each of you in closing, tensions in another part of the world have been a major theme of discussion here at your meeting, the Pakistani Prime Minister today saying he was disappointed in the communique relating to condemning India for the nuclear test. If I could ask each of you your reaction to that and how you see that process going forward in the days ahead.

Prime Minister Blair. It's a very strong statement in the communique, condemning the Indian nuclear tests and, what's more, putting strong pressure on India to sign up unconditionally for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty. And I urge Pakistan now, as we all do in our communique, not to follow them down that route because the world is a dangerous enough place as it is, and we fear for the future if these nuclear tests carry on.

President Clinton. Well, first, it's the strongest possible statement we could have gotten. Some of our members are philosophically opposed to the imposition of sanctions under virtually any circumstances. And as you know, the United States, Japan, Canada, perhaps others will follow, did impose economic sanctions. But it's a strong statement. What we have now to do is to build on it. We have to tell the Pakistanis, "If you're willing to not go down this road, which we believe is a loser, let's work together to try to define a way to protect your security without becoming a nuclear power."

And we have to go back to the Indians and say, "Let's find a way to protect your security and honor the greatness of your democracy without becoming a nuclear power. This is a bad thing, but let's minimize this. This is not a good thing for the world. The Russians and the Americans, we're trying to lower our nuclear arsenals. We're trying to make this problem go away for the world. And we do not need to just have a whole lot of other people with smaller nuclear arsenals on the assumption that they'll never be used. You can't do that."

Mr. King. Thank you both.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:10 p.m. in the Weston Park estate. In his remarks, the President referred to Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, independent chairman of the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland. Mr. King referred to Social Democratic and Labour Party leader John Hume; and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Birmingham Group of Eight Summit Statement *May 16, 1998*

Drugs and International Crime

1. Globalisation has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in transnational crime. This takes many forms, including trafficking in drugs and weapons; smuggling of human beings; the abuse of new technologies to steal, defraud and evade the law; and the laundering of the proceeds of crime.

2. Such crimes pose a threat not only to our own citizens and their communities, through lives blighted by drugs and societies living in fear of organised crime; but also a global threat which can undermine the democratic and economic basis of societies through the investment of illegal money by international cartels, corruption, a weakening of institutions and a loss of confidence in the rule of law.

3. To fight this threat, international cooperation is indispensable. We ourselves, particularly since the Lyon summit in 1996, have sought ways to improve that cooperation. Much has already been achieved. We acknowledge the work being done in the UN, the EU and by other regional groupings. We welcome the steps undertaken by the G8 Lyon Group to implement its 40 Recommendations on transnational organised crime and the proposals G8 Justice and Interior Ministers announced at their meeting in Washington last December. By working together, our countries are helping each other catch criminals and break up cartels. But more needs to be done. There must be no safe havens either for criminals or for their money.

4. We have therefore agreed a number of further actions to tackle this threat more effectively:

—We fully support efforts to negotiate within the next two years an effective United Nations convention against transnational organised crime that will provide our law enforcement authorities with the additional tools they need.

—We agree to implement rapidly the ten principles and ten point action plan agreed by our Ministers on high tech crime. We call for close cooperation with industry to reach agreement on a legal framework for obtaining, presenting and preserving electronic data as evidence, while maintaining appropriate privacy protection, and agreements on sharing evidence of those crimes with international partners. This will help us combat a wide range of crime, including abuse of the internet and other new technologies.

We welcomed the FATF decision to continue and enlarge its work to combat money-laundering in partnership with regional groupings. We place special emphasis on the issues of money laundering and financial crime, including issues raised by offshore financial centres. We welcome the proposal to hold in Moscow in 1999 a Ministerial meeting on combating transnational crime. We agreed to establish Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) where we do not already have them, in line with our national